Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 COLOMB 00560 141208Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 DHA-02 MCT-01 IO-13 /085 W
----------141213Z 032764 /17
P R 141100Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6718
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY LONDON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE COLOMBO 0560

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: PINT, CE
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY TO END IN WAKE OF ASSEMBLY RECESS

REF: (A) COLOMBO 0546, (B) 0559 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: AS A NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE OF THE PROROGATION OF THE NATIONAL STATE ASSEMBLY (NSA), THE SIX-YEAR OLD STATE OF EMERGENCY WILL LEGALLY LAPSE FEBRUARY 15. WITHOUT THE EMERGENCY, THE SUN PRESS GROUP WILL REPORTEDLY RESUME PUBLICATION, AND

EXTENSIONS OF THE TERMS OF MUNICIPAL AND TOWN COUNCILS WILL END, THUS NECESSITATING PROMPT ELECTIONS FOR THOSE LOCAL BODIES. THOSE IMPRISONED UNDER THE EMERGENCY WITHOUT CHARGES BEING FILED ARE NOW BEING RELEASED. IN OTHER POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, FIVE DISSIDENT GOVERNMENT M.P.'S HAVE FORMALLY RESIGNED FROM THE SRI LANKA FREEDOM PARTY, HINTING THAT THEY WOULD FORM A NEW PARTY. YET ANOTHER NEW PARTY WAS ANNOUNCED BY AN ACQUITTED 1971 INSURGENT, WHO WILL STAND FOR ELECTION FROM A SOUTHERN SEAT. THE PM HAS URGED HER PARTY TO PREPARE FOR ELECTIONS; HOWEVER, HER FOREIGN
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 COLOMB 00560 141208Z

TRAVEL PLANS WOULD SEEM TO MILITATE AGAINST A SNAP POLL. END SUMMARY.

2. WITH THE PROROGATION OF THE NSA FEBRUARY 10 (REF A), THERE IS NO LEGAL METHOD BY WHICH THE CURRENT STATE OF EMERGENCY CAN BE RENEWED, SINCE THE PUBLIC SECURITY ORDINANCE REQUIRES THAT IT BE REPROCLAIMED MONTHLY BEFORE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

THE NSA. THEREFORE, IT WILL EXPIRE FEBRUARY 15,
ONE MONTH AFTER THE LAST RENEWAL. THE EMERGENCY WAS
DECLARED ON MARCY 16, 1971, AT THE FIRST STIRRINGS OF
THE YOUTH INSURGENCY, BUT WAS LATER USED FOR A VARIETY
OF PURPOSES, INCLUDING DETAINING TAMIL DISSIDENTS WITHOUT
TRIAL, BANNING OCCASIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS, ENDING
STRIKES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICES, POSTPONING LOCAL GOVERNMENT
ELECTIONS, AND SHUTTING DOWN AN OBSTREPEROUS,
OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER GROUP.

3. THUS, THE END OF THE EMERGENCY WILL BRING SOME
CHANGES IN SRI LANKA. THE SUN GROUP OF NEWSPAPERS
(SHUT DOWN IN APRIL 1974), WITH ITS REPUTATION FOR
INDEPENDENT AND INCONOCLASTIC REPORTING, HAS KEPT ITS
PRESSES OILED IN ANTICIPATION OF THIS DAY. IT REPORTEDLY
INTENDS TO RESUME PUBLICATION WITHIN SIX TO
EIGHT WEEKS, AFTER REASSEMBLING A STAFF. ELECTIONS FOR
MUNICIPAL , TOWN, AND VILLAGE COUNCILS (WHOSE TERMS
WERE EXTENDED UNDER EMERGENCY REGULATIONS) WILL HAVE TO
BE HALD SHORTLY, POSSIBLY BEFORE GENERAL ELECTIONS, IN
WHICH CASE THEY WILL GIVE SOME INDICATION OF THE PREVAILING
POLITICAL MOOD THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

4. THERE HAS BEEN A DWINDLING NUMBER OF PRISONERS BEING
HELD UNDER THE EMERGENCY WITHOUT CHARGES HAVING BEEN
FILED AGAINST THEM. MOST WERE RELEASED OVER THE WEEKEND
IN ANTICIPATIONOF THE END OF THE EMERGENCY. THIRTEEN
WERE RADICAL TAMILS PICKED UP AFTER THE 1975 ASSASSINATION
OF THE JAFFNA MAYOR.OTHERS WERE INSURGENTS AGAINST
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 COLOMB 00560 141208Z

WHOM THE GOVERNMENT COULD NOT ASSEMBLE ENOUGH EVIDENCE FOR
CONVICTION. BOTH G.D. "CASTRO" DHARMASEKERA AND GAMINI
YAPA, PROMINENT INSURGENTS, HAVE THUS BEEN RELEASED.
DHARMASEKERS WAS A SUSPECTED ORGANIZER OF THE ATTACK
ON THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN MARCH 1971, ALTHOUGH HE WAS
NOT BROUGHT TO TRIAL IN THE ATTACK CASE ITSELF (IN
WHICH ALL SUSPECTS WERE ACQUITTED). THE RELEASE OF
THOSE DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL DOES NOT, OF COURSE,
AFFECT THOSE INSURGENTS WHO WERE CONVICTED BY THE CRIMINAL
JUSTICE COMMISSION AND WHO CONTINUE TO SERVE THEIR
SENTENCES.

5. AS HAD BEEN ANTICIPATED, THE FOUR DISSIDENT SRI LANKA
FREEDOM PARTY (SLFP) M.P.'S WHO SUPPORTED THE DECEMBER/
JANUARY STRIKE, FORMALLY RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY FEBRUARY
11. A FIFTH, BONNIE JAYASURIYA (AVISSAWELLA) ANNOUNCED
HIS RESIGNATION FEBRUARY 14. THE ORIGINAL FOUR--
NANDA ELLAWELA (RATNAPURA), A.M. JINADASA (KEKIRAWA),
TENNYSON EDIRISURIYA (TISSAMAHARAMA), AND GAMINI

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

ARIYATILLEKE (MASKELIYA)--WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO CORSS
THE AISLE DRAMATICALLY AT THE PLANNED FEBRUARY 17 NO-
CONFIDENCE DEBAGE BUT, WITH THE NSA RECESSED, THEY RESIGNED
INSTEAD WITH LITTLE PUBLICITY, EXCEPT IN THE
OPPOSITION PRESS. THEY HAVE ANNOUNCED THE
FORMATION OF A NEW PARTY, WHICH SOME HAVE SPECULATED
WOULD BE NAMED THE JANATA PRAJATANTRAVADI (PEOPLE'S
DEMOCRATIC) PARTY. WHILE CRITICIZING THE PROPOSED
SOCIALIST UNITED FRONT (SUF) OF THE TROTSKYITES, THEY
ADMITTED THAT THEIR DIFFERENCES WITH THE SUF WERE
"AMONG FRIENDS" AND COULD BE RESOLVED. THE PM DECLARED
HERSELF UNCONCERNED BY THE DEFECTIONS AND PREDICTED THAT
THE FOUR WOULD DIE A NATURAL POLITICAL DEATH, AS HAD
MANY PREVIOUS CROSSOVERS IN LOCAL POLITICAL HISTORY.

6. MAHINDA WIJESEKERA, AN ACQUITTED 1971 INSURGENT,
ANNOUNCED FEBRUARY 10 THE FORMATION OF YET ANOTHER PARTY-
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

THE MAHAJANA VIMUKTI PARTY (ALMOST IDENTICAL IN MEANING TO THE
INSURGENTS' PRE-1971 JANATA VIMUKTI FRONT). WIJESEKERA
WILL CONTEST THE SOUTHERN CONSTITENCY OF DEVINUWARA,
WHOSE INCUMBENT IS UNP STALWART RONNIE DE MEL, AND
ATTEMPT TO RALLY DISATISFIED YOUTH TO HIS BANNER.

7. THE LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY (LSSP) IS GLEEFULLY OBSERVING
THE DEFECTIONS FROM THE OLD UNITED FRONT AND
PUBLICLY WELCOMING ALL LEFTISTS INTO ITS SUF. IT SEES
TIS ULTIMATE GOAL OF PRYING THE COMMUNIST PARTY (CP)
OUT OF THE UNITED FRONT NOW WITHIN REACH. THE CP
POLITBURO ISSUED A STATEMENT AFTER THE NSA WAS
RROROGUED, SAYING THAT THE ACTION WAS TAKEN WITHOUT
THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND WAS "INIMICAL TO THE DEMOCRATIC
PROCESS." THE LSSP DAILY JANADINA FEBRUARY 14 CLAIMED
THAT THE CP POLITBURO HAD TAKEN A DECISION TO RESIGN AND
WOULD ANNOUNCE IT AFTER THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MET
FEBRUARY 16. LEFTIST SLFP MINISTER T. B. SUBASINGHE, A
FORMER LSSP'ER, IS ALSO REPORTED TO BE WAVERING AND MAY
RESIGN FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

8. IN A BIT OF INTERESTING SPECULATION FOR THOSE WHO
LIKE THEIR POLITICS DEVIOUS, THE FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC
REVIEW SUGGESTS A "PLOT", WHEREBY THE DIDDIDENT SLFP
MPS, WITH THREE SLFP MINISTERS, QUIT TO FORM A UNITED
FRONT TO INCLUDE THE LSSP WHICH , AFTER THE ELECTION
WOULD THEN FORM A COALITION IWHT THE SLFP AND CP, THE
WHOLE THING BEING A DEVICE TO BRING THE LSSP BACK INTO A
COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH FACE SAVED ALL AROUND. THE
DIFFICULTY WITH THIS SECEARIO IS THAT WITHOUT ELECTORAL
UNDERSTANDINGS IN THE SEVERAL CONSTITUENCIES BEFORE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

THE ELECTION, IT IS DOUBTFUL IF THERE WOULD BE
ANYTHING MUCH REMAINING ON THE LEFT TO CARRY OUT THE PLAN.

9. IN HER MEETINGS WITH SLFP MP'S FEBRUARY 11, THE
PM OFFERED HER RATIONALIZATION FOR PROROGUING THE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 05 COLOMB 00560 141208Z

ASSEMBLY: "POLITICIANS WHO HAVE NO PLACE IN THE
COUNTRY SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO USE NSA AS A
FORUM TO INDULGE IN CHARACTER ASSASSINATION AND MUD-SLINGING."
SHE ALS TOLD THE M.P.'S TO BEGIN PREPARING FOR ELECTIONS.
NEVERTHELESS, HER FOREIGN TRAVEL PLANS FOR MARCH (REF B), UNLESS
SOON CANCELLED, WOULD SEEM TO MILITATE AGAINST IMMEDIATE ELECTIONS.

10. COMMENT: THE PROROGUING OF THE ASSEMBLY SEEMS
TO HAVE ACTED AS A CATALYST FOR POLITICIANS TO BEGIN
IN EARNEST THEIR REALIGNMENTS IN PREPARATION FOR
ELECTIONS. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE WIDESPREAD DEFECTIONS
FROM THE SLFP ALTHOUGH SEVERAL MORE MO.P.'S MAY CROSS
OVER, PARTICULARLY IF THE CP DECIDES TO LEAVE THE
COALITION. THE LSSP'S SOCIALIST UNITED FRONT DOES NOT
NOW APPEAR TO BE A POTENT FORCE ALTHOUGH THAT COULD CHANGE
IF THE CP JOINS.
REED

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, REPORTS, EMERGENCY PLANNING, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977COLOMB00560
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770051-0999
Format: TEL
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770245/aaaabnxn.tel
Line Count: 198
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 73ff6dc7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 COLOMBO 546
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3331322
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EMERGENCY TO END IN WAKE OF ASSEMBLY RECESS
TAGS: PINT, CE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/73ff6dc7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009